



**Vancouver Artillery
Association News**



**RUSI News
Vancouver**

Van Arty Association and RUSI Van Members News April 21, 2015

Wednesday Lunches

The 15 Field Officers Mess holds weekly lunches, serving a 5 course, 'homemade' meal for only \$15- you won't find a better meal - or a better deal, anywhere. If you are in the area on a Wednesday, drop in and join us for lunch.

The dress for Wednesday lunches is suit/blazer/sports jacket and tie. Dress for ladies is the equivalent. Your guests are always welcome but don't forget to tell them about dress requirements BEFORE they come.

Parking around the Armoury is always a problem. Only the day staff are allowed to park in the vehicle compound. If you park on 11th Ave, make sure you are in a legal parking spot and not blocking access to the vehicle compound. If you are illegally parked, there is a good chance you will get a ticket.

BCR Curry Monthly Lunch – No lunch for April.

From the Journal of Capt Fred G Coxen RFA - 1915

April 24th: Received orders to move with all speed to YPRES; marched and billeted for the night near LA GORGUE.

April 25th: Long march to ODDERDUM [where] I went forward as billeting party. [There was] very heaving fighting going on at YPRES. I heard of the gigantic German assault, the retirement of the French, and of the forced retirement of the Canadians in consequence. The battle was raging fiercely all night and it sounded horrific.

April 26th: Marched about 8:30 am with Battery and halted outside Vlamertinghe. George, Collins and I went with CO to [Ypres to] reconnoiter a position for the battery. As we neared Ypres, we could see the hellish bombardment going on. On all sides [of the road] were dead horses, overturned lorries and discarded equipment. Hundreds of wounded were being carried down, or hobbling along the best way they could. As we galloped through the town, some awful sights met our eyes, men and horses blown to pieces. Every few yards along the road was something dead, and bits of men and horses were everywhere. We found the Artillery HQ and the Captain went for orders. The shells were absolutely falling everywhere – it was an inferno. Every second man we met was wounded, and we said to each other, 'I reckon we're on the last lap this journey.' We found a likely position, where some old trenches and dugouts were, about ½ mile in rear of ST JEAN. Shells were bursting right over, but everywhere seemed to be the same. The Captain didn't like it, for there was practically no cover, [so] we went a little more

near the town. A Canadian officer asked what we were wanting, and when we told him that we thought of bringing the battery into position there, he said – ‘For God’s sakes, don’t bring them here, this corner is Hell itself. Get out of it as quick as you can.’ Shells were dropping all around and it seems marvelous that none of us have got hit. I afterwards learned that this part was called ‘Dead Man’s Corner’ (*AKA Hellfire corner*), and it deserved the name, for many dead were thereabouts. We had just left and decided it would have to do, for all places seemed alike.

While the battery was coming up, we started to lay out a wire to a likely spot to observe. George took a couple [of men] to start from the place they found, and I took Collins and Billison with me. [We] ran a wire from the position through the village of ST JEAN. We reached the village alright, and as everywhere [else], it was being shelled. As I jumped a small stream by the church, a large shell burst almost on us, [so] we took shelter behind a building. [We] could not move for shrapnel bullets. We [were shelled] for quite an hour, 13 to the dozen; it was awful. Just a few yards from us was an artilleryman and his horse lying dead. A motor ambulance smashed, the driver [was] killed and burned to a cinder by the petrol which ignited. A soldier was lying dead in the ditch, and round the end of the building were several others. After a time it abated a little and we started again. I met George, he had been in a much-like stew as I. We went through the village and it was terrible. I managed to get a drink of water and after a while I decided to go back to the guns, if I could get there. I hadn’t gone far when they started again, and we ran for our previous little shelter, and gained it just in time. Shells burst very near, and I said to Collins, ‘What a stink, and strange smell.’ My eyes were watering and we all three began coughing and decided to chance it anywhere [else]. After an exciting half-hour [we] got to the guns. I felt bad and sick. We learned from an officer that it was due to the gas shells the Germans were using. It was very lucky we decided to get out of it or undoubtedly the three of us would have been gassed properly, instead of partially, but it was bad enough, sufficient to stop me eating anything for three days.

April 26th: The guns were getting it pretty warm, but we started firing in good style. The wire broke three times, but by arrangements we raised the range, while out of communication. Twice during the afternoon I went through ST JEAN and each time thought I should never get back. I felt quite alright and thought I was bound to meet it somewhere, so [I] took it easy, but at nightfall I thought I must have been very lucky. The enemy kept up hard shelling everywhere; it was one continual roar, shell[s] frequently bursting over us and bullets and splinters knocking lumps off my dugout. I really thought it was the finishing touch, for of all the places I had been through [in] the campaign, this was by far the worst; it seemed impossible for one to live long in it. I had a few hours sleep, awakening now and again when a large shell burst somewhere near. At daylight we were at it again; the first thing that met my gaze was a shell dropped just the other side of the hedge. [It fell] among what was left of a Canadian Battery Wagon Line, (most of the men had been killed when the Germans broke through the previous week). They bayoneted them whilst they slept and hung the Ferrier to a tree. [Then they] crucified a Sergeant of the Canadian Scottish to a barn door with bayonets. This wagon line had about a dozen horses left of 200 – the guns were captured by the enemy, but were afterwards regained by a magnificent charge by the Canadian infantry. These are fine fellows

and splendid fighters and hated the cursed Germans like fury for their murderous ways of waging war. A couple of days previous the Canadian Scottish were ordered to retire, but refused to do so. [They] charged the enemy on their own. It was a mad thing to do and they lost over 500 men, but captured some trenches and captured 100 prisoners or more; not one of these prisoners were brought down. We were fighting as they – no quarter, and the Canadians gave none. Just in [the] rear of our guns, there was a Prussian Guardsman (a fine fellow, fully 6' 3" in height and big with it) pinned to a tree with a bayonet. [He had] a post card stuck on his forehead with the words, 'Canada does not forget.' The byword of the Canadians were, 'we'll give 'em crucify.' The happenings around of this period would fill a book with horrors of this description. [Word spread] of the splendid fighting of the Canadians and the Indian troops who were with us. Truly enough the Canadians had served Ypres, as did the 7th, 5th, and 1st Divisions in November.

World War 2 - November 1940

John Thompson Strategic analyst quotes from his book "Spirit Over Steel"

April 22nd: The Germans encounter British troops north of Lillehammer, and quickly dislodge them too.

April 24th: Narvik is bombarded by British warships.

April 25th: British and Norwegian troops slow the Germans in the Gudbrandsdal area, but cannot stop them.

Tough Choices Ahead for the Military

03/26/2015 | Winnipeg Free Press - ONLINE EDITION

There has always been a certain sleight of hand by the Conservative government when it comes to defence spending. In one hand, the government holds itself up as the fearless enemy of dictators and terrorists around the world. In the other, defence budgets are reduced and ships tied up at port to save money, while CF-18s are cannibalized to keep others in the air. In 2008, the government unveiled an ambitious new defence strategy that included new investments across the board. The country was going to get fancy new ships of all types, the best jet fighter, new army vehicles and more men and women in uniform. The reality is some new equipment is being added, but most of the promised inventory has been sidelined, downgraded or postponed indefinitely. The new yet-to-be-built ice-breakers, for example, have been dubbed "slush-breakers" because they can only cut through the thinnest ice. The problem for defence analysts is that the budget and long-term spending plans have never been very clear or transparent, even though it accounts for some 20 per cent of all program spending.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has tried to calm the worry warts with assurances Canada would spend what it needed to spend to meet its military obligations. As if it were that easy. It's simple enough to dip into the treasury for operational funds to sustain the current war in Iraq and Syria, quite another to supply ships at sea when Canada is without a single supply ship. Now comes a report from the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer that says the government has not

budgeted enough cash to sustain the military at its current level into the future. The options are to increase spending or shrink the military, the PBO says in its report. Tell us something we don't know.

The independent budget watchdog did not analyze what the shortfall might mean in terms of military effectiveness. Regrettably, it has also never studied whether the \$21-billion annual defence budget is spent wisely. What it did find, however, is that Canada lags behind other countries in informing Parliament about the medium and long-term affordability of the defence program. The government publishes an estimate of its spending plans over a three-year-period, but "it is subject to considerable variation in the transition from planned activities to execution." As result, the PBO said, legislators are largely uninformed about defence spending in general, a far cry from the standards in other democracies, particularly the United States, Great Britain and Australia. In those countries, much greater detail is provided to legislators who are empowered to scrutinize what is, after all, the largest single budgetary item. Of course long-term plans are subject to variations in these countries, too, but the PBO said the bottom line is the government does a poor job in informing its legislators and citizens on defence spending. One of the worst examples of Mr. Harper's needless obsession with secrecy occurred earlier this year when the PBO was denied information about the cost of Canada's war in Iraq. The government eventually relented, pegging the cost at \$122 million, not counting salaries and other fixed costs. The role of the military is to protect Canadians at home, support NATO and NORAD, and participate in international missions, both independently and with allies. To do so, the defence department "must remain flexible, prepared and capable of sustaining an agile world-class force," the PBO says. At the moment, however, the country's Armed Forces appear to be heading into a nosedive as the Harper government makes balancing the budget its highest priority. Meanwhile, Canadians remain in the dark about the future of the military.

Petition Wants MND to Return Drill Rifles to Navy League Cadets

DAVID PUGLIESE, OTTAWA CITIZEN April 9, 2015



Major Peter Garton inspects members of the Navy League Cadet Corps at HMCS Unicorn. Greg Pender / Saskatoon Star Phoenix

A petition is being circulated to try to force the Navy League of Canada to reverse its decision to take away replica rifles from its cadets. [The online petition](#), with 932 signatures as of Thursday, asks Defence Minister Jason

Kenney to freeze funding for the Navy League until the organization allows the drill rifles back in the hands of the youngsters. The cadets, aged between nine and 12 years, had been using the non-firing replicas for drills and ceremonial duties. But the Navy League has now ordered those removed in a “policy change that reflects international norms with respect to children being perceived as carrying arms,” according to a letter obtained by the Citizen. The decision affects 3,400 cadets in 110 communities, including Ottawa.

The petition notes that the Navy League receives \$432,000 in government funding each year. The Quebec (Eastern) Cadet Region is fully funded by the government, it added. The petition calls on Kenney to order Department of National Defence officials to restore rifle drill for Quebec Region Sea Cadets, and to suspend government funding for the Navy League until rifle drill is restored for the younger cadets. “Rifle drill is a critical symbol of military pride and an important part of military history,” the petition noted. The petition on [Change.org](https://www.change.org) was started by Cadet Accountability in Winnipeg, but offered no details on whether that is an organization or an individual. But military insiders say there is little Kenney can do because the Navy League funds its cadet program using its own money. Asked whether Kenney would act on the petition, his spokeswoman, Lauren Armstrong, responded with an email statement: “The Navy League of Canada operates independently of the Canadian Armed Forces and is responsible for its own decisions and policies.”

Navy League spokesman Andrew Warden noted there is a federal government grant to assist with the operation of the league’s national office in Ottawa. But Warden pointed out the money is not for the cadet program. “The Navy League Cadet program delivered by the Navy League of Canada is entirely self-funded and is not supported by the National Office Grant from the Government of Canada,” he stated. “The Navy League Cadet program is funded through donations, local and regional fundraising initiatives, and assessment fees paid by each Navy League Cadet Corps.” A US website, the DrillMaster, which provides coverage of honour guard and drill team training, has also taken up the issue and is urging its readers to write Kenney. The drill rifles used by the Navy League cadets are white. But in some cases, cadet units had started using more realistic-looking rifle replicas. The rifle issue came to the attention of Navy League officials two years ago after an instructor in Oshawa, Ont., travelled on public transit carrying with a bag of drill rifles. A member of the public saw a barrel sticking out of the bag and called police.

Lynn Hawkeye, national vice president of Navy League cadets, wrote in a March 15 letter sent to staff that the ban on drill rifles only affects younger cadets. The Quebec division of the Navy League cadets had already removed the drill rifle training from their routine and there were no negative repercussions, Hawkeye stated. Royal Canadian Sea, Army and Air Cadet programs, which are delivered by the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces, are not affected by the new policy, the DND has pointed out. “The celebration of all aspects of Canada’s military history and heritage is core to the Canadian Armed Forces’ Cadet Program,” Armstrong stated. “As such, they will continue to use firearms in drills and competitions.”

LGen Vance Seen as First Choice for CDS

David Pugliese, Ottawa Citizen 7 Apr 2015

LGen Jonathan Vance, who has emerged as the frontrunner to be Canada's next top military commander, has experience as a combat veteran and a reputation as a team player. Both attributes make him attractive to the Conservative government in the midst of a war in Iraq and Syria. Gen Vance is head of Canadian Joint Operations Command and has been one of the key officials involved in directing Canada's role in the Iraq war, a mission that has now expanded to Syria. He has also served in key command positions during Canada's war in Afghanistan, formulating strategy used by Canadian troops in Kandahar. Gen Vance recently had a meeting with Prime Minister Stephen Harper, fuelling speculation he is on the cusp of being selected as



the country's next chief of the defence staff, or CDS. LGen Marquis Hainse, the commander of the army, and Vice Admiral Mark Norman, who heads the navy, were also being considered for the job. The successful candidate will take over from the current chief of the defence staff, Gen Tom Lawson, sometime in the summer. Lawson informed the government in March he would be stepping down in the fall rather than hoping to renew his term. Sources say Gen Lawson is not being forced out: he is leaving because he is tired of the job and having to deal with ongoing cuts to the Canadian military. Even tougher decisions loom, and he feels it is time for someone new to take on the role, according to sources.

Gen Vance was the government's point man the next year to take over the Afghan mission when another general was relieved of his command amid allegations he had an intimate relationship with a subordinate. In 2012, he was ready to take the blame after then-defence minister Peter MacKay was accused of misleading the public on the cost of the Libyan war, according to documents obtained by the Citizen. Gen Vance's appointment would continue the lockout of naval officers from the top military job. Air force and army officers have held the position since 1997. That fact had prompted optimism in the ranks of the Royal Canadian Navy that Vice-Admiral Norman, an officer with strong administrative skills, would be first choice for the CDS position. Navy officers had also argued that the next CDS would need to be a strong advocate of the maritime service, which has found itself in a dire situation with aging warships and the likelihood of replacements still years away.

Gen Lawson, a former fighter pilot, took the helm of the Canadian Forces in October 2012. He has been extremely low-key as CDS and the government has been happy with that quality, and with his performance overall, said defence analyst Martin Shadwick. The general steadfastly protected the government when allegations arose earlier this year that Harper and various cabinet ministers had misled Parliament on the Iraq mission. Gen Lawson actively defended the Conservatives, claiming that Canadian Special Forces were not in a combat role when they called in air strikes and engaged in gun battles with Islamic extremists in northern Iraq. He also

recently took the blame for Defence Minister Jason Kenney over inaccurate claims by the politician that Arab allies in the Syrian air campaign did not possess smart bombs. Like Lawson, Vance is viewed inside National Defence headquarters and the government as a team player. In 2009 he publicly rebuked then-Liberal Sen Colin Kenney, who suggested the Afghan war was lost and “hurtling toward a Vietnam ending.”

Major Richard Gratton receives the Caring Canadian Award

When the Right Honourable Roméo LeBlanc became Governor General of Canada, he was determined to thank the thousands of caring people who give so much to their fellow citizens, the unsung heroes who volunteer their time, their efforts and a great deal of their lives to helping others, and who ask for nothing in return. In 1995, the Governor General’s Caring Canadian Award was created. The Caring Canadian Award consists of a certificate and a lapel pin presented to recipients by the governor general or by lieutenant-governors, territorial commissioners, mayors or partner organizations.



The award’s emblem represents Canadians who selflessly give of their time and energy to others. The maple leaf symbolizes the people of Canada and their spirit; the heart depicts the open-heartedness of volunteers; and the outstretched hand portrays boundless generosity. The helping hand and heart support the maple leaf. The blue and gold colours, which appear on the vice regal flag, indicate the award’s connection with the governor general.

Ottawa, April 7, 2015

His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada presented Major Richard Gratton with the Caring Canadian Award.



Major Richard Gratton, a member of 2nd Field Regt RCA, receiving the Award from Governor General David Johnson

The Citation read:

“For the past three years, Major Richard Gratton (Beaconsfield, Quebec) has been working to create a park that would honour the contributions and sacrifices made by past and present military personnel, law enforcement agents, firefighters, first responders and paramedics. With the support of the Beaconsfield community and a team of volunteers, he formed the non-profit and nonpartisan Heroes Park committee. Under his leadership, and with the support of funding from individuals, businesses and corporations, as well as military, law enforcement and community leaders, the committee has raised \$250,000 to bring the project to life.”

Who is it?

Last Week: So far we have: Julie Wong, Ruby Chu, Stuart Mont, Michelle Paulse. Some people think the last girl is Dawne Belcher but I'm not so sure. These T-shirts were produced in the mid to late 70s and this was probably a post exercise smoker, by the bleak and sun scorched background, most likely at Yakima



This Week: The armoured might of the Canadian Army is on full display in this photo from the mid-1930s. It is said that when Hitler saw a copy of this in his favourite newspaper, "The Third Reich Saturday Evening Jolly and Sportive News (mit komics)", he almost gave up and went back to house-painting. Mussolini was so full of fear that he sent his army off to Ethiopia, hoping they wouldn't be found by Johnny Canuck and his tracked behemoths.



So, dear reader, this week's quiz is the latest in our series, "What's that gizmo?" We, of course, know exactly what these Mad Max monstrosities are, but hope that you, especially those who served with an armoured regiment, can enlighten us a bit

as to their correct name, when they saw service, why they were particularly attractive to men in kilts, and in what year they were turned into chicken coops. Answers and other detailed information can be sent to the editor, or to the author, John Redmond (johnd_redmond@telus.net).

From the 'Punitentary'

Why is a dog's nose in the centre of its face? Because it's the 'scenter'.

Murphy's other Laws

A proliferation of new laws creates a proliferation of new loopholes.

Quotable Quotes

Sometimes the road less traveled is less traveled for a reason. - *Jerry Seinfeld*



The Buffalo Celtic Music Society proudly present a fundraiser for the
RCMP 'E' Division Pipes & Drums



Tartan Day Ceilidh

Come enjoy...

**Dinner, Dancing, Piping, Drumming,
Scotch Tasting & Silent Auction**

Featuring:

The Shot of Scotch Vancouver Highland Dancers

Saturday, April 25th 2015, 6:00 PM

Location:

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Tickets \$60

**Dress: Formal, tartan encouraged
(wear your tartan kilt, tie, scarf or sash)**

For tickets and information contact Brent Jette: 604-308-1424



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- \$160 early bird before May 31st 2015 (\$175 after May 31st)
- Full Registration (Friday meet and greet buffet + Saturday breakfast + Saturday banquet and dance)
- Friday Only (Meet and Greet and buffet): \$90
- Saturday Only (Banquet and Dance) \$110

Activities

- Day trips on Saturday (Comox Air Museum, Little Qualicum Cheeseworks, Cathedral Grove)
- Memory Room: a gathering place for attendees to reconnect with our heritage as 1 Air Division. Chat, look at pictures, and reminisce
- Photographer: affordable portrait sittings and a group photo

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Mention "RCAF" for rates between \$25-35, full book-up

Travel

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<http://www.proreg.ca/events/rcdf/reunion/>

Or Via Mail (contact us for a registration package if you are not on email/internet)

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